



▲ Aaron Kraft, bib No. 17742, walks through a water station as he nears the 13-mile mark of the Marine Corps Marathon Oct. 27, 2002. Kraft finished the marathon in 4:19:30. Edward Echols, bib No. 22426, directly behind him, finished in 4:11:29.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Dolloson

By Staff Sgt. Kevin Dolloson,
WASHINGTON

For the record-breaking 18,000 people who ran

the 27th Marine Corps Marathon Oct. 27, 2002, the reasons to run were as varied as the competitors themselves. Some ran in memory of loved ones, others to forget bad times or to find new ways to approach changes in their lives. Many ran for charitable causes, and some ran the punishing 26.2-mile course just to prove they could.

Yet, before the final lace was tied or the last ounce of the 2,080 ounces of petroleum jelly was applied to the last runner's inner thigh; before the carbohydrate binges of the last few days prior to the race or the last shot of adrenaline through the last pounding heart, they each shared a common bond—a beginning.

A Couple's Journey

Daniel and Kristine Scarber, both Marines stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., use running as a tool to help build and maintain their relationship, they said. "We encourage each other to keep going when another mile might be out of the question. We both run because we have to, but we run together because we want to."

So, for the Scarbers the most logical progression of their running relationship was to prepare for and finish a marathon together. But, training for the event together became impossible for them when Kristine Scarber was deployed to Kuwait until Oct. 5-three weeks before the race.

While in Kuwait, she trained for 16 weeks, she said, but "never completed a run more than six miles, and never really ran more than 15 miles a week."

The lack of preparation took its toll during the race, she said. The agonizing punishment of running her first marathon made her begin to question her sanity. "But it was something that my husband and I promised to do with each other. It was a promise we'd made, and a promise we would not break."

Though it was her first time running the marathon, she walked the course in 1999 as a "cheerleader" when Daniel Scarber ran his first marathon.

"I've been trying to get back to run another Marine Corps Marathon since the first one," said Daniel Scarber. "I told Kris from the time we were talking about entering that I would run the

MARINE CORPS MARATHON BY THE NUMBERS:

▼ John Stephens, bib No. 3735, takes a double-fisted fluid replenishment Oct. 27, 2002 as he walks through a water station near mile 13 of the Marine Corps Marathon. Stephens finished the marathon in 4:37:48.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Dolloson



Marathon Runners

Hit Streets of Washington



whole thing with her.” And he did. The couple finished the race in 6 hours, 20 minutes, 42 seconds.

“Some of my friends tried to give me a hard time about how long it took to run it,

but it meant more to me to finish with my wife than it would to finish in two hours.”

The Ultimate Goal

While the Scarbers’ journey was one of companionship and camaraderie, Bob Hughes of Broomall, Pa. took his journey to overcome a family tragedy. Hughes’ wife of 31 years succumbed to cancer in January 2001.

“It was unexpected,” he said. “Just one month prior, we were living our lives as usual. A week before Christmas, we became aware of a problem, but didn’t know the extent of it. After Christmas, things quickly went downhill, and Joan died before we could understand what happened to us.”

Hughes, a former Air Force captain, went through periods of depression and loneliness he never experienced before, and he said the stress was unbearable.

◀ **Elizabeth Scanlon** crosses the Marine Corps Marathon finish line at 2:57:27, qualifying her as the first place finisher in the women’s division, and 90th overall. According to a Washington Running Report article, the Alexandria, Va. native says running is where she excels so she pursues it fully, and brushes aside the thought of other pursuits. Sgt. Maj. Alford L. McMichael, Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps, and Shannon Spann, widow of former Marine, and CIA agent, Michael Spann (the first American casualty in Afghanistan), cheer on Scanlon as she crosses the finish line.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Dolloson

His running career began in May 2001 shortly after reading about mountain climbers about to climb Mount Everest.

“Mountain climbing has long been something that I had an interest in, but never pursued,” he said. “So I began to explore the physical requirements needed to mountain climb, and one of the first requirements cited was a strong cardiovascular system.”

So Hughes started running/walking one-tenth of a mile at a time. Then the one-tenths started adding up, and it wasn’t long before he was running miles. In December 2001, he ran his first 10-kilometer race. He then began to realize as he reflected on the past year, that running helped him to relieve the stress and depression, and he was now able to enjoy life. He started to get serious about running, and decided to run the Marine Corps Marathon.

Hughes set a course to build his stamina up to marathon capacity. He was set to run the Runner’s World half marathon in April 2002, but a hip injury kept him out of that race. He then set his focus on the Broad Street Run in Philadelphia. The 10-mile run built his confidence and he knew that he could step it up to the next level. In September, he came back to Philadelphia to run the Philadelphia Distance Run—a half marathon—and by this time had already planned to try to qualify for the Boston Marathon.

Hughes, 55, ran more than 1,200 miles during his training for the Marine Corps Marathon, not including the half marathons and numerous 10K races he ran. The training paid off and Hughes finished the Marine Corps marathon in 3:41:40—more than three minutes under the qualifying time of 3:45 needed for him to run the Boston Marathon.

While people from all walks of life participate in the Marine Corps



▲ **More than 18,000 runners** make their way through the Marine Corps Marathon arches Oct. 27, 2002, signifying the start of the 26.2-mile journey. Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Dolloson

Marathon, the Marine Corps Team—composed of seven Marines—ran the marathon for similar reasons. Of course, their ultimate goal was to finish first in the team competition... they finished third with a time of 10:51:00, just under seven minutes behind the first place team.

They maintain the same spirit—if not more—which drives others to run the marathon.

“The Marine Corps Marathon is more than a race to me,” said Mary Kate Bailey, Office of the Inspector, Quantico, Va., who finished in 03:02:24. “My Dad was a Marine. I always think about what he gave up as a Marine, and my three brothers are Marines. These reasons make the marathon more than a race to me.”

Alexander Hetherington, an AH-1W Cobra pilot stationed in Camp Pendleton, Calif., boasts his 10th

Marine Corps Marathon, and seventh with the Marine Corps Team. Hetherington, who finished in 02:36:04, has found himself running all over the world during his many years of preparation for every marathon.

“I was deployed with the 13th MEU and did the majority of my running on the flight deck of the USS Bonhomme Richard, or on a treadmill in the ship’s gym,” said Hetherington. He has pounded the grounds of Afghanistan, Singapore, Thailand and Australia, and has run alongside Royal Marines, CIA agents, and Polish, Norwegian and German Army personnel. Throughout his travels and encounters, Hetherington said a good run always makes liberty more fun and gives him a greater appreciation of what each place has to offer.

Faye Hutchison, 1Force Service Support Group, Camp Pendleton, Calif., summed up the reason to run a marathon for Marines and civilians alike when she said, “the most important part of the journey is the camaraderie.”

“Running is an awesome sport,” said Hutchison, who finished in 03:11:26. “But with it comes a lot of pain from high mileage, early mornings, speed workouts, and personal sacrifice.

“Just knowing your teammates are there enduring the pain and satisfaction found as each foot pounds the pavement makes the experience special and unique,” she said. “The bond we hold as teammates, and as Marines, is what sets us apart from other runners.” **M**

The 28th Marine Corps Marathon is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 26, 2003 in Arlington, Va. For more information, visit www.marinemarathon.com.

